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**REPORT OF THE
AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY
AWARENESS STUDY COMMISSION**



**REPORT TO THE
1989 GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF NORTH CAROLINA
1989 SESSION**

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, the agriculture, forestry, and seafood industries have played an essential and vital role in supporting both the rural and urban populations of North Carolina. In recent years, all of these industries have experienced severe financial setbacks and instability due to inclement weather, inflation, reduction in foreign exports, and other unavoidable circumstances. In order to insure that the agriculture, forestry, and seafood industries maintain their ability to produce for future needs, the 1983 General Assembly enacted HB 1169 (Chapter 915, 1983 Session Laws) creating the Agriculture, Forestry, and Seafood Awareness Study Commission. The Commission was successful in 1983 through 1985 in its findings and recommendations for the agriculture, forestry and seafood industries. Based on this success, the 1985 General Assembly permanently established the Agriculture, Forestry, and Seafood Awareness Study Commission in the law (Chapter 792, 1985 Session Laws), so it could continue to study these three industries (See Appendix A for legislation). The major purpose of the Commission continues to be focusing public attention on the importance of these three industries to North Carolina's economy.

Commission's Charge

The charge to the Commission by the General Assembly contains the following directions for studying the agriculture, forestry, and seafood industries:

1. Study the influence of these industries on the economy of the State.
2. Develop alternatives for increasing the public awareness of these industries.
3. Study the present status of the three industries.
4. Identify the problems limiting the future growth of these industries.
5. Develop an awareness of the importance of science and technological development to the future of these industries.
6. Formulate plans for new State initiatives and support for the three industries.

These directions form the foundation of the Agriculture, Forestry, and Seafood Awareness Study Commission's review of these industries and serve as a basis for its final recommendations.

Commission Membership

The membership of the Commission includes citizens of North Carolina who are interested in the vitality of the agriculture, forestry, and seafood sectors of the State's economy. Nine members of the Commission are appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Lieutenant Governor, with each official appointing three. The following individuals also serve on the Commission:

1. Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee
2. Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee
3. Commissioner of Agriculture or his designee
4. Member of the Board of Agriculture
5. President of the N. C. Farm Bureau or his designee
6. Master of the N. C. Grange or his designee
7. Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Community Development

The Co-chairmen of the Commission are the Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee and Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee (See Appendix B for membership list).

Technical Advisory Committee

The legislation for the Agriculture, Forestry and Seafood Awareness Study Commission authorizes it to appoint a Technical Advisory Committee. Members of the Committee are from the various organizations, commodity groups, associations, and companies representing agriculture, forestry, and seafood. The purpose of the Technical Advisory Committee is to render technical advice and assistance to the Commission (See Appendix C for membership list).

PROCEEDINGS

The sixteen-member Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission held its first meeting on February 4, 1988 and was organized under the leadership of Representative Vernon G. James of Pasquotank County and Senator James D. Speed of Franklin County. At this meeting, the Commission decided it would not study the seafood industry because the General Assembly had authorized a separate Seafood Study Commission to consider the problems and needs of the seafood industry.

The Commission then reviewed the findings and recommendations in its January 1987 report to the General Assembly. Many of the Commission's recommendations were considered and enacted by the 1987 General Assembly. Based on this success during the previous sessions, the Commission agreed to continue pinpointing problems and developing an awareness of the importance of the agriculture and forestry industries to the economy of North Carolina. The Commission also agreed that there was still a need for new State initiatives to assist these two industries.

At its March 4, 1988 meeting, the Commission voted to appoint the Technical Advisory Commission to assist them in their deliberations. The Commission then heard reports on the Conservation Provision of the 1985 Farm Bill from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and Soil Conservation Service. Concerns were raised about the N. C. Department of Revenue's interpretation that land put in to grass via the Conservation Reserve program did not qualify for agricultural use value taxation. The Commission passed a resolution urging the Department of Revenue to reconsider its interpretation. This issue was later resolved during the 1988 Session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Jim Cummings with the Division of Soil and Water Conservation, Department of Natural Resources and Community Development, then gave a status report on the North Carolina Agricultural Cost Share Program for Non-point Source Pollution Control. He stated the program was being successfully implemented in fifty-six counties. Statewide implementation of the program would cost \$10 million a year. A report then followed on the Forestry Marketing program and Forestry Best Management Practices program. The Commission concluded its meeting with a report from Commissioner Jim Graham of the Department of Agriculture on agricultural development projects.

The Commission's third meeting was held in Elizabeth City, North Carolina on April 18 and 19, 1988. The primary focus of the meeting was marketing of agricultural products. Mr. Wayne Miller, Director of the Division of Marketing in the Department of Agriculture, gave a report of the major activities of his Division including the Flavors of Carolina program and the Goodness Grows in North Carolina program. A slide presentation was shown highlighting all of the Marketing Division's programs. Following the marketing presentation, a public meeting was held to hear comments from the public on the needs and problems of farmers in Northeastern North Carolina. On April 19, 1988, the Commission viewed an example of a best management practice funded through the Agricultural Cost Share program.

The Commission's fourth meeting was held on September 16, 1988, after the 1988 Session of the General Assembly. Committee staff provided the Commission with an update on legislation enacted and appropriations made during the 1988 Session. In addition, the Commission heard reports from the Rural Economic Development Center and the North Carolina Commission on Jobs and Economic Growth. The Commission requested that the Departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Community Development, and the School of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University provide the Commission with a list of their budget priorities and recommendations for the 1989 General Assembly.

While the Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission was meeting, its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), under the chairmanship of M. Edmund Aycock, began holding its own meetings. The TAC met three times during 1988 to develop findings and recommendations for the Commission.

At its November 16, 1988, meeting the Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission reviewed the recommendations of the Departments and the Technical Advisory Committee for final consideration. In addition, Ms. Paula Guptin of the North Carolina Farm Bureau spoke on the harassment farmers were receiving from the Farmworkers Legal Service of North Carolina relating to claims by migrant farm workers. The Commission voted to send a letter to the North Carolina Congressional delegation expressing their concerns about the Farmworkers Legal Services.

As a result of the Commission having many representatives of the agriculture and forestry industries present information concerning the status of each industry and with assistance from its Technical Advisory Committee, the Commission adopted its final report to the 1989 General Assembly on December 8, 1988. The Commission's findings and recommendations, included in this report, fall into six categories which affect both the agriculture and forestry industries. These six categories are Marketing, Research, Education, Environment, Regulations and Forest Resource Protection. The Commission believes these six categories represent the major areas of concern for the Agriculture and Forestry industries, and the intent of these findings and recommendations is to ensure that these two vital industries can continue and increase their contribution to the North Carolina economy.

MARKETING

Increased and improved marketing of North Carolina agricultural and forestry products has been a top priority of the Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission since its inception in 1983. The findings and recommendations which follow are a continuation of this Commission's efforts to improve the marketing of all agricultural and forestry products.

Findings:

1. Both the agriculture and forestry industries have problems with marketing their products because the necessary resources and/or infrastructure for extensive marketing is not always available.
2. A changing and rapidly diversifying agricultural economy has created new challenges and opportunities to expand existing markets or develop new markets for North Carolina agricultural and forestry products.
3. Maintaining effective grades, standards and other measures of product quality is important in communicating the value of agricultural and forestry products to the consumer.
4. More agricultural and forestry product processing facilities are needed in North Carolina to increase the added value of North Carolina commodities.

5. The true economic value of agriculture to the North Carolina economy is not known.
6. More cooperatives are needed for the marketing of some agricultural products.
7. Adequate cold storage and cooling facilities are important to ensure the quality of many agricultural products.
8. Current labeling laws allow for misrepresentation of product ingredients. All products should be properly labeled, but labels should not be required to include everything used on agricultural crops.

Recommendations:

1. The Commission recommends increasing the promotion of North Carolina agricultural and forestry products nationally and internationally. In addition, the Commission recommends increased funding for State agencies with marketing programs for agriculture and forestry, including \$2.5 million for the 1989-91 biennium to expand the domestic and international marketing programs of agricultural products by the N.C. Department of Agriculture.
2. Since all the programs of the Department of Agriculture provide direct and indirect benefits to the marketing of agricultural products, the Commission recommends that the General Assembly support the Department of Agriculture's expansion and capital requests for the 1989-91 Biennium. The Department is requesting \$26.4 million for operating expansion and \$75.5 million for capital improvements.
3. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly continue to increase funding for improvements to the highway system.
4. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly continue to increase support for capital improvements to the State Ports' facilities by appropriating \$340,000 to the Department of Natural Resources and Community Development for two feasibility studies to study improvements to the Wilmington Port's harbor.

5. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly establish incentives for new and existing agricultural and forest product processing firms.
6. The Commission recommends funding for research to determine the true value of agriculture to the North Carolina economy.
7. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly establish a Legislative Study Commission on the marketing of all North Carolina commodities.

RESEARCH

Agricultural and forestry research is another vital element in the development and improvement of these two industries. The Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission believes increased efforts in research will insure that North Carolina maintains and increases its competitive edge in agriculture and forestry.

Findings:

1. North Carolina's comparative advantage in agricultural and forestry production and marketing with other regions and countries is highly dependent upon a strong research base and the timely delivery of research based technology to the producer and marketing firm.
2. The ever-changing status of agricultural and forestry technology requires consistent public support for agriculture and forestry field research to assist farmers in improving net farm income and providing quality products for consumers.
3. Improved post-harvest management will increase the market value of North Carolina's agricultural commodities.

Recommendations:

1. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly appropriate \$10.5 million to support 1989-91 budget requests from the North Carolina Agricultural Research Service and the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service at N.C. State University. This funding will support agricultural research and extension efforts in the following areas:
 - a. Sustaining the competitiveness of North Carolina Agriculture.
 - b. Enhancing North Carolina's natural resources base.
 - c. Enhancing the nutrition, diet and health of North Carolinians.
 - d. Revitalizing rural North Carolina.
 - e. Enhancing the Aquaculture program.
2. The Commission also recommends that the General Assembly appropriate \$24.2 million for capital improvements for the Agricultural Research and Extension Services at North Carolina State University.
3. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly also consider additional funding for basic and applied research to analyze domestic and foreign supply, demand, and price relationship for North Carolina agricultural and forest products.

EDUCATION

Increasing North Carolinians' awareness of the importance of the agricultural and forestry industries to the State's economy continues to be a part of the Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission's charges. The Commission feels that education is one way to increase this awareness.

Findings:

1. There is a shortage of properly trained people available to fill agricultural jobs.
2. People need to be encouraged to consider agriculture and forestry industries as a career.

3. Agriculture is being de-emphasized in secondary education.
4. Legislatively initiated scholarship programs for students becoming teachers has encouraged students to consider teaching as a career choice.

Recommendations:

1. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly direct the Board of Governors, the Board of Education, and the Community College system to evaluate their agriculture programs to determine if they are training students for jobs available in the agri-business industries.
2. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly establish and fund a scholarship program for students choosing agriculture and forestry as a career.
3. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly direct the Board of Governors to exempt vocational agriculture teachers from the second non-agriculture related major requirement.
4. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly support the Department of Public Instruction and the Board of Education in expanding the teaching of agricultural awareness in the public schools.

ENVIRONMENT

Through its studies, the Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission has found that the state of North Carolina's environment has a tremendous effect on the agriculture and forestry industries. The following findings and recommendations by the Commission recognize the role of the environment in insuring the health of these two industries.

Findings:

1. Maintaining and protecting water and air quality is critical for the agriculture and forestry industries. Groundwater contamination is an especially critical concern.

2. The Environmental Review Commission is considering the consolidation of all environmental programs into one agency. The regulation of pesticides which is currently in the Department of Agriculture may be included in the consolidation.
3. Environmental regulations are necessary but should not tie the hands of farmers and landowners. Environmental regulations are more effective when enforcement and education are combined.
4. Pesticides are critical to the agriculture and forestry industries.
5. The North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program for Non-Source Pollution Control is decreasing non-point source pollution in the 56 counties participating in the program.
6. Exclusions for farming and forestry from the Sedimentation/Pollution Control Act must be maintained.

Recommendations:

1. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly appropriate \$1.6 million for a statewide groundwater monitoring system to be implemented by the Departments of Agriculture, Human Resources, and Natural Resources and Community Development.
2. The Commission recommends the provision of additional basic and applied research and educational funding to understand groundwater contamination and to determine how to correct the problem where it exists.
3. The Commission recommends the General Assembly appropriate an additional \$4 million to implement and maintain the Agriculture Cost Share program statewide.
4. The Commission recommends the General Assembly continue the farming and forestry exclusions in the Sedimentation/Pollution Control Act.
5. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly not remove the Pesticide Section from the Department of Agriculture under any consolidation of environmental programs.

REGULATIONS

Regulation of the agriculture and forestry industries has a big impact on the activities of the two industries. In some cases, these regulations can be a burden to these industries; therefore, the Commission makes the following findings and recommendations to ease some of the regulatory burdens.

Findings:

1. Migrant labor laws and regulations are enforced by four State agencies with different standards which are confusing to farmers who try to obey the law.
2. Farmers are always involved in making decisions on statewide policies, which have an effect on their business.

Recommendations:

1. The Commission recommends that the Chairmen of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees appoint a special joint subcommittee during the 1989 Session to study all laws, rules, and regulations related to migrant laws and make recommendations on how to improve the laws and make them less burdensome for farmers.
2. The Commission recommends that practicing farmers be included on any board, commission, or committee which reviews State policies affecting agri-business to insure the needs and problems of farmers are considered.

FOREST RESOURCE PROTECTION

The Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission recognizes that the forestry industry has unique resource protection problems and needs. The following findings and recommendations target these special needs of the forestry industry.

Findings:

1. Forest fires, natural disasters, insects, and diseases all pose threats to our State's forest resources and the preservation of those resources.

2. Inadequate and obsolete fire suppression equipment is adversely impacting the Division of Forest Resources' ability to effectively respond to and control forest fires.
3. Many of the facilities operated by the Division of Forest Resources are in disrepair and are failing to meet the firefighting needs of the State.
4. The cooperative effort between the Department of Correction and the Division of Forest Resources has led to the successful implementation of the BRIDGE program and the development of the first youthful offenders forestry camp.
5. State forests help educate North Carolinians on the importance of forestry to the State.

Recommendations:

1. To insure that the Division of Forest Resources has adequate resources for fire suppression, the Commission recommends that the General Assembly appropriate \$4 million during the 1989-91 Biennium to replace deteriorating fire suppression equipment and purchase new equipment. With these funds, the Division of Forest Resources can add equipment and personnel to areas with inadequate fire suppression coverage. In addition, the Commission recommends that the General Assembly appropriate \$200,000 to increase salaries for temporary employees of the Division of Forest Resources to 1988 levels.
2. The Commission also recommends that the General Assembly appropriate \$2 million for the 1989-91 Biennium to continue the replacement program of obsolete radio equipment for the Division of Forest Resources.
3. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly appropriate \$2 million to replace and renovate county equipment headquarters across the State. This funding will allow the Division of Forest Resources to renovate or replace twelve units during the 1989-91 Biennium.

- 4. The Commission recommends that the General Assembly expand the BRIDGE program by appropriating \$1.5 million to build and operate a second youthful offenders forestry camp.
- 5. The Commission recommends that the 1989 General Assembly appropriate \$300,000 to provide operational funding for the new Lake Jordan State Forest.

ARTICLE 19.

Commission on Agriculture, Forestry, and Seafood Awareness.

'120-150. Creation; appointment of members.

There is created an Agriculture, Forestry, and Seafood Awareness Study Commission. Members of the Commission shall be citizens of North Carolina who are interested in the vitality of the agriculture, forestry, and seafood sectors of the State's economy. Members shall be as follows:

- (1) Three appointed by the Governor;
- (2) Three appointed by the President of the Senate;
- (3) Three appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- (4) The chairman of the House Agriculture Committee;
- (5) The chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee;
- (6) The Commissioner of Agriculture or his designee;
- (7) A member of the Board of Agriculture designated by the chairman of the Board of Agriculture;
- (8) The President of the North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation, Inc., or his designee;
- (9) The Master of the North Carolina State Grange or his designee; and
- (10) The Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and Community Development.

Members shall be appointed for two-year terms beginning October 1 of each odd-numbered year. The cochairmen of the Commission shall be the chairmen of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees respectively. (1985, c. 792, s. 20.1.)

\$120-151. Advisory Committee.

Upon proper motion and by a vote of a majority of the members present, the Commission may appoint an Advisory Committee. Members of the Advisory Committee should be from the various organizations, commodity groups, associations, and councils representing agriculture, forestry, and seafood. The purpose of the Advisory Committee shall be to render technical advice and assistance to the Commission. The Advisory Committee shall consist of no more than 20 members plus a chairman who shall be appointed by the cochairmen of the Commission. (1985, c. 792, s. 20.1.)

\$120-152. Subsistence and travel expenses.

The members of the Commission who are members of the General Assembly shall receive subsistence and travel allowances at the rate set forth in G.S. 120-3.1. Members who are officials or employees of the State of North Carolina shall receive subsistence and travel allowances at the rate set forth in G.S. 138-6. All other members plus the Chairman of the Advisory Committee shall be paid the per diem allowances at the rates set forth in G.S. 138-5. Other members of the

Advisory Committee shall serve on a voluntary basis and not receive subsistence and travel expenses. (1985, c. 792, s. 20.1.)

§120-153. Facilities and staff.

The Commission may hold its meetings in the State Legislative Building with the approval of the Legislative Services Commission. The Legislative Services Commission shall provide necessary professional and clerical assistance to the Commission. (1985, c. 792, s. 20.1.)

§120-154. Duties.

The Commission shall bring to the attention of the General Assembly the influence of agriculture, forestry, and seafood on the economy of the State, develop alternatives for increasing the public awareness of agriculture, forestry, and seafood, study the present status of agriculture, forestry, and seafood, identify problems limiting future growth and development of the industry, develop an awareness of the importance of science and technological development to the future of agriculture, forestry, and seafood industries, and formulate plans for new State initiatives and support for agriculture, forestry, and seafood and for the expansion of opportunities in these sectors.

In conducting its study the Commission may hold public hearings and meetings across the State.

The Commission shall report to the General Assembly at least one month prior to the first regular session of each General Assembly. (1985, c. 792, s. 20.1.)

§§120-155 to 120-157. Reserved for future codification purposes.

AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & SEAFOOD AWARENESS STUDY COMMISSION

MEMBERS

<u>Members</u>	<u>Area Code/Phone</u>	<u>Appointed By</u>
Senator James D. Speed Co-Chairman Route 6, Box 542 Louisburg, NC 27549	(919)853-2167	Chairman of Senate Agriculture Committee
Rep. Vernon G. James Co-Chairman Route 4, Box 251 Elizabeth City, NC 27909	(919)330-4394	Chairman of House Agriculture
Rep. Edith L. Lutz Route 3, Box 197 Lawndale, NC 28090	(704)538-7818	Speaker
Rep. Robert L. McAlister Route 1, Box 336 Ruffin, NC 27326	(919)939-9816	Speaker
Rep. R. M. Thompson, Sr. Post Office Box 942 Edenton, NC 27932	(919)482-8431	Speaker
J. Michael Evans Box 429 Nashville, NC 27856	(919)459-4581	Lt. Governor
Senator R. L. Martin Post Office Box 387 Bethel, NC 27812	(919)825-4361	Lt. Governor
Edwin W. Woodhouse NC Poultry Federation 4020 Barrett Drive Suite 102 Raleigh, NC 27609	(919)783-8218	Lt. Governor
W. M. Lewis, Jr. Route 1, Box 1 Creston, NC 28615	(919)246-7188	Governor
Perry R. Lowe, Jr. Route 2, Box 89 Moravian Falls, NC 28654	(919)921-3448	Governor

AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & SEAFOOD AWARENESS STUDY COMMISSION

MEMBERS

<u>Members</u>	<u>Area Code/Phone</u>	<u>Appointed By</u>
Dr. Neil B. Webb 4019 Glen Laurel Drive Raleigh, NC 27612	(919)787-9171 (O) (919)787-2816 (H)	Governor
Robert H. Caldwell N.C. State Grange Post Office Box 9665 Greensboro, NC 27429	(919)854-9000 1-800-432-4857	Master, N.C. State Grange
Ray Forrest Department of Agriculture Post Office Box 27647 Raleigh, NC 27611	(919)733-7125	Department of Agriculture (Designee)
W. B. Jenkins N.C. Farm Bureau Federation Post Office Box 27766 Raleigh, NC 27611	(919)782-1705	President, N.C. Farm Bureau Federation
Honorable S. Thomas Rhodes Secretary Department of Natural Resources and Community Development Post Office Box 27687 Raleigh, NC 27611	(919)733-4984	Secretary, Department of Natural Resources and Community Development
John C. Howard Route 1, Box 333 Deep Run, NC 28525	(919)568-4204 (O) (919)568-4696 (H)	Board of Agriculture
STAFF:	Ms. Carol Shaw Legislative Services Office (919)733-4910	
CLERK:	Ms. Marie Sheets (919)733-5878 (O) (919)851-5267 (H)	

APPENDIX C

1988 TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

OF THE

AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND SEAFOOD AWARENESS STUDY COMMISSION

Billy Yeargin
N.C. Yam Producers Commission
108 W. Main Street
Benson, NC 27504

Clint Reese
N.C. Cattlemen's Association
Post Office Box 25756
Raleigh, NC 27611

Walter Cherry
N.C. Pork Producers Association
156 Mine Lake Court
Raleigh, NC 27615

Charles King
Tobacco Associates
Post Office Box 10603
Raleigh, NC 27605

Norfleet Sugg
N.C. Peanut Growers Association, Inc.
Post Office Box 1709
Rocky Mount, NC 27801

Jim Oliver
Commerce Department
Raleigh, NC 27611

Bob Slocum
N.C. Forestry Association
417 N. Boylan Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27603

Carlyle Teague
Cooperative Council of NC
Post Office Box 10426
Raleigh, NC 27605

Edmund Aycock
N.C. Agri-Business Council
Suite 211
3701 National Drive
Raleigh, NC 27612-4864

John W. Hamby
2505 Alpine Road
Durham, NC 27707

Senator Vernon E. White
Post Office Box 41
Winterville, NC 28590

Dr. Durward F. Bateman
College of Ag & Life Sciences
NCSU - Box 7601
Raleigh, NC 27696-7601

Jim Wilder
N.C. Soybean Producers Association, Inc.
211 Six Forks Road
Suite 102
Raleigh, NC 27604

Benny Bunting
United Farmers Organization
Post Office Box 176
Oak City, NC 27857

Dave Edmiston
Texasgulf Chemicals Company
Post Office Box 30321
Raleigh, NC 27622-0321

Walton Dennis
Plant Food & Pesticide Assn.
Post Office Box 19011
Raleigh, NC 27619

Everett Suddreth
NC Food Dealers Association
Post Office Box 6066
Charlotte, NC 28207

William V. Griffin
NC Assn. of Soil & Water Consrv.
1505 Island Creek Road
New Bern, NC 28560

James H. Ferrebee, Jr.
Box 138
Shawboro, NC 27973

Joe Wilson
NC Poultry Federation, Inc.
Post Office Box 1946
Greenville, NC 27834

Jack Williams
NC Corn Growers Assn.
Route 2
Faison, NC 28341

